



**IMPORTANCE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM
THE OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTIONS (OHRP)
ABOUT MULTIPLE PROJECT ASSURANCES (MPAs)**

December 18, 2000

OHRP is phasing in a simplified Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) Registration system (see OHRP's website at <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/irbasur.htm>).

Under the new system, each IRB will be assigned a unique IRB Number; each organization operating an IRB will be assigned a unique Organization (IORG) Number; and each institution filing an Assurance will be assigned a unique Assurance (FWA) Number.

MPA IRBs have been automatically registered in the new system. MPA institutions should check the postings at <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/assurance/iorg-a-f.htm>, and contact OHRP if any errors are identified.

Effective immediately, all IRB membership updates should be submitted to OHRP using the new IRB Registration format (see <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/assurance/regirbi.htm>). MPA institutions should update their IRB rosters and provide the additional requested information as soon as possible, being sure to include the appropriate IORG Number indicated on the list of registered IRBs.

Current MPAs will remain in effect until the designated expiration date, or December 31, 2003, whichever comes first. MPA institutions may file a new FWA at any time prior to that date. However, OHRP encourages MPA institutions to file an FWA as soon as possible (see OHRP's website at <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/assurance/filasuri.htm>).

MPAs that have been administratively extended by OHRP must be replaced with an FWA no later than March 1, 2001. See the website immediately above for details about filing an FWA.

Except for IRB membership updates, OHRP will no longer accept modifications to existing MPAs. MPA institutions should simply file an FWA if changes are necessary.

Note that Joint Assurances and Inter-Institutional Amendments are not permitted under the new system. Each legally separate institution must file its own FWA. Institutions currently covered under Joint MPAs or MPA InterInstitutional Amendments (IIAs) must file their own FWA when the MPA institution does so. However, institutions which do not operate their own IRBs may designate in the FWA any registered IRBs that agree to the designation.

OHRP solicits your comments and suggestions for improvement of this new system, especially during its initial test phase, which is expected to last until approximately March 1, 2001.

Thanks very much for your support and assistance as OHRP phases in the new system.